

Lower Taylor Creek Restoration Project

Frequently Asked Questions

I. Project Overview and Background

Where is the Lower Taylor Creek Restoration Project Area?

Taylor Creek is located near the south end of Lake Washington in southeast Seattle. The creek originates in unincorporated King County and passes through a natural area known as Dead Horse Canyon within Lakeridge Park. It then passes through residential yards and a culvert under Rainier Avenue South before discharging into Lake Washington. The culvert under Rainier Ave S, along with other barriers in the creek, prevents fish passage to good quality habitat within Dead Horse Canyon.

In 2010 and 2011, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) purchased property at the lower reaches of Taylor Creek, located near the south end of Lake Washington in southeast Seattle. SPU also intends to purchase an additional property on Rainier Ave. S., located above an existing culvert.

Why is Seattle Public Utilities restoring Lower Taylor Creek?

This restoration project will address storm-related localized flooding and sediment deposition within the project limits. The project will also improve stream channel habitat and fish passage between Lake Washington and Dead Horse Canyon.

Lower Taylor Creek offers good habitat for threatened juvenile Chinook salmon. In its current state, there are fish passage barriers and sediment at the mouth of Taylor Creek, which diminish habitat quality. In its current configuration, the narrowed creek can flood during heavy rains. The existing culvert under Rainier Avenue South is also past its design life.

What is the projected timeline for the project?

SPU is currently developing three planning concepts for creek alignments and determining their cost estimates. This phase is expected to be completed by spring 2016. The design and construction schedules will be determined based on available funding.

What are the next steps?

SPU is currently in the planning phase of the project. During this phase, SPU will review three planning concepts that meet project goals and identify a preferred creek alignment, which will be further detailed during the design phase.

Will I have an opportunity to discuss this project with City of Seattle representatives?

Yes, SPU will continue to gather input about the planning concepts and will be in your neighborhood conducting outreach to residents about the project throughout the year. There will be two public meetings where residents will be able to ask questions more specific to the planning concepts and potential impacts during construction.

There will also be at least two meetings with residents and business owners with properties adjacent to the project area. Please check the project website for updates: www.seattle.gov/util/TaylorCreek

II. Public Access Option

What was SPU's decision-making process to recommend the public access option?

Since 2013, SPU has been working with Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks), the community, and other City Departments to evaluate possible public access opportunities for the Lower Taylor Creek Restoration Project site. SPU considered five public access options, including No Access, Viewpoint, Scheduled Access, Limited Access, and Open Access. Each of these options were evaluated based on the following six criteria (in no particular order):

- Habitat Improvements
- City Cost, Operations, and Maintenance
- City Safety and Liability
- Community and Neighborhood Amenities
- Potential Neighborhood Impacts
- Traffic Safety and Mobility

Lower Taylor Creek residents and stakeholders had opportunities to share their thoughts on the public access options and contributed to an SPU decision to allow public access. The community was asked to provide feedback on the recommendation and share any final thoughts related to public access at the site. Here are the [survey results](#) (pdf) we received. In January 2015, SPU approved public access to the Lower Taylor Creek site. Learn more about the [public access options analysis](#).

How will the City choose the design for some form of public access?

Over the upcoming months, SPU will develop high-level planning concepts of creek alignments, assemble cost estimates, and determine a preferred creek alignment.

SPU will present information on the three planning concepts in spring 2015 and gather public input. This input will be used to help inform SPU's triple bottom line analysis of the concepts to select a preferred planning concept. SPU considers the social, financial, and environmental impacts of each option, including such factors as: transportation (particularly construction-related traffic impacts), parking, pedestrian and bicycle impacts, long-term environmental impacts, community preferences, and impacts to ratepayers.

This phase takes time to complete, but it is a necessary step to inform the design process and is expected to be completed by spring 2016. We will continue to provide updates about what we've been doing, the feasible planning concepts that have been selected, and upcoming opportunities to engage the public during the design process.

Is SPU acquiring additional property?

SPU is in the process of negotiating the purchase of one additional property on the south side of Rainier Ave. S. The purchase of this property will provide more flexibility for the design process, enable better creek alignments, and will result in a final design that has less impact to neighbors. This additional property will also allow more space for sediment management than previous proposed creek alignment alternatives.

III. Impacts to Residents

What can I expect with public access?

Many aspects of what public access looks like will be developed during the design phase of the project. What we know so far is that the design will be consistent with natural areas around the city and will be similar to Dead Horse Canyon.

How will construction affect me?

SPU is currently in the planning phase of the project. Construction related impacts will be determined and addressed during the project's design phase. SPU is committed to working with community members to address impacts during construction.

IV. Environmental, Health, and Safety Impacts

I am worried about the environmental impacts of the public access option. Will Seattle Public Utilities undergo a formal environmental review process?

Yes. In accordance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the Seattle Municipal Code (Chapter 25.05), SPU will analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed project and will share its findings and invite public comment prior to making final project decisions.

Does public access conflict with salmon restoration efforts?

SPU is aware of the potential public access impacts on salmon restoration efforts. SPU will work with regulatory agencies to ensure that salmon restoration goals are met during the project's design phase, and will balance this with the opportunity for educating the public on salmon (similar to Carkeek Park).

What about pedestrian safety?

SPU is aware of pedestrian safety concerns and is working with SDOT to address the need for potential improvements.

How will people access the park?

Normal Parks operations are being considered, with Dusk to Dawn closures. Additional details will be addressed during the design phase in accordance with existing Parks protocols.

Stay in touch

SPU is happy to answer questions and provide any information you need to be informed about this project and its impacts to you and your neighborhood.

For questions or comments on this project, contact:

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Sign up for the Taylor Creek Restoration Mailing List at: www.seattle.gov/lists/taylor_creek_restoration.htm

Need your information in another language?

For interpretation services, please call (206) 233-7861.

如需要口譯服務，請撥電話號碼 (206) 233-7861.

통역 서비스를 원하시면 (206) 233-1086으로 전화하세요.

Para servicios de interpretación por favor llame al (206) 233-7861.

Về dịch vụ phiên dịch xin gọi (206) 233-7861.

Para sa serbisyo ng tagapagpaliwanag, tumawag sa (206) 233-7861.